



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Announcement of Grant and Loan Application Deadlines and Funding

Levels

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of funding availability and solicitation of applications.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) announces its Revolving Fund Program (RFP) application window for Fiscal Year (FY) 2012. In addition to announcing the application window, RUS announces the available funding of \$497,000 and maximum amounts for RFP competitive grants for the fiscal year.

The RFP is authorized under section 306(a)(2)(B) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (Con Act), 7 U.S.C. 1926 (a)(2)(B). Under the RFP, qualified private, non-profit organizations receive RFP grant funds to establish a lending program for eligible entities. Eligible entities for the revolving loan fund will be the same entities eligible, under paragraph 1 or 2 of Section 306(a) of the Con Act, 7 U.S.C. 1926(1) or (2), to obtain a loan, loan guarantee, or grant from the RUS Water, Waste Disposal and Wastewater loan and grant programs.

DATES: You may submit completed applications for grants on paper or electronically according to the following deadlines:

- Paper copies must be postmarked and mailed, shipped, or sent overnight *no later* than [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] to be eligible for FY 2012 grant funding. Late or incomplete applications will not be eligible for FY 2012 grant funding.
- Electronic copies must be received by [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] to be eligible for FY 2012 grant funding. Late or incomplete applications will not be eligible for FY 2012 grant funding.

ADDRESSES: You may obtain application guides and materials for the RFP program at the Water and Environmental Programs (WEP) Web site: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/UWP-revolvingfund.html>. You may also request application guides and materials by contacting Joyce M. Taylor at (202) 720-0499

Submit completed paper applications for RFP grants to the Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Room 2233, STOP 1570, Washington, DC 20250-1570. Applications should be marked Attention: Joyce M. Taylor, Water and Environmental Programs.

Submit electronic grant applications at <http://www.grants.gov> (Grants.gov) and follow the instructions you find on that Web site.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joyce M. Taylor, Community Programs Specialist, Water Programs Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service, STOP 1570, Room 2233-S, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-1570; telephone: (202) 720-9589, fax: (202) 690-0649.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview

Federal Agency: Rural Utilities Service (RUS).

Funding Opportunity Title: Grant Program to Establish a Fund for Financing Water and Wastewater Projects (Revolving Fund Program (RFP)).

Announcement Type: Funding Level Announcement, and Solicitation of Applications.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.864.

Due Date for Applications: Applications must be mailed, shipped or submitted electronically through Grants.gov no later than [INSERT 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] to be eligible for FY 2012 grant funding.

Items in Supplementary Information

I. Funding Opportunity: Brief introduction to the RFP.

II. Award Information: Available funds, maximum amounts \$497,000.

III. Eligibility Information: Who is eligible, what kinds of projects are eligible, what criteria determine basic eligibility.

IV. Application and Submission Information: Where to get application materials, what constitutes a completed application, how and where to submit applications, deadlines, items that are eligible.

V. Application Review Information: Considerations and preferences, scoring criteria, review standards, selection information.

VI. Award Administration Information: Award notice information, award recipient reporting requirements.

VII. Agency Contacts: Web, phone, fax, email, contact name.

I. Funding Opportunity

Drinking water systems are basic and vital to both health and economic development. With dependable water facilities, rural communities can attract families and businesses that will invest in the community and improve the quality of life for all residents. Without dependable water facilities, the communities cannot sustain economic development.

RUS provides financial and technical assistance to help communities bring safe drinking water and sanitary, environmentally sound waste disposal facilities to rural Americans. It supports the sound development of rural communities and the growth of our economy without endangering the environment.

The Revolving Fund Program (RFP) has been established to assist communities with water or wastewater systems. Qualified private, non-profit organizations, who are selected for funding, will receive RFP grant funds to establish a lending program for eligible entities. Eligible entities for the revolving loan fund will be the same entities eligible to obtain a loan, loan guarantee, or grant from the Water and Waste Disposal loan and grant programs

administered by RUS, under 7 U.S.C. 1926(a)(1) and (2). As grant recipients, the non-profit organizations will set up a revolving loan fund to provide loans to finance predevelopment costs of water or wastewater projects, or short-term small capital projects not part of the regular operation and maintenance of current water and wastewater systems. The amount of financing to an eligible entity shall not exceed \$100,000.00 and shall be repaid in a term not to exceed 10 years. The rate shall be determined in the approved grant work plan.

II. Award Information

Available funds: Rural Development is making available \$497,000 for competitive grants in FY 2012.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Who is eligible to apply?

An applicant is eligible to apply for the RFP grant if it:

1. Is a private, non-profit organization;
2. Is legally established and located within one of the following:
 - (a) A state within the United States;
 - (b) The District of Columbia;
 - (c) The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; or
 - (d) A United States territory;
3. Has the legal capacity and authority to carry out the grant purpose;

4. Has a proven record of successfully operating a revolving loan fund to rural areas;
5. Has capitalization acceptable to the Agency, and is composed of at least 51 percent of the outstanding interest or membership being citizens of the United States or individuals who reside in the United States after being legally admitted for permanent residence;
6. Has no delinquent debt to the Federal Government or no outstanding judgments to repay a Federal debt;
7. Demonstrates that it possesses the financial, technical, and managerial capability to comply with Federal and State laws and requirements;
8. Corporations that have been convicted of a felony (or had an officer or agency acting on behalf of the corporation convicted of a felony) within the past 24 months are not eligible. Any Corporation that has any unpaid federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability is not eligible.

B. What are the basic eligibility requirements for a project?

1. The following activities are authorized under the RFP statute:
 - (a) Grant funds must be used to capitalize a revolving fund program for the purpose of providing direct loan financing to eligible entities for pre-development costs associated with proposed or with existing water and wastewater systems, or,

(b) Short-term costs incurred for equipment replacement, small-scale extension of services, or other small capital projects that are not part of the regular operations and maintenance activities of existing water and wastewater systems.

2. Grant funds may not be used to pay any of the following:

- (a) Payment of the Grant Recipient's administrative costs or expenses, or,
- (b) Delinquent debt owed to the Federal Government.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. The grant application guide, copies of necessary forms and samples, and the RFP regulation are available from these sources:

1. The Internet: :<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/UWP-revolvingfund.html> or
<http://www.grants.gov>.

2. For paper copies of these materials, you may call (202) 720-9589.

B. You may file an application in either paper or electronic format.

Whether you file a paper or an electronic application, you will need a DUNS number.

1. DUNS Number.

As required by the OMB, all applicants for grants must supply a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (Duns) number when applying. The Standard Form 424 (SF-424) contains a field for you to use when supplying your DUNS number. Obtaining a DUNS number costs nothing and requires a short telephone call to Dun and Bradstreet. Please see http://www.grants.gov/applicants/request_duns_number.jsp for more information on how to obtain a DUNS number or how to verify your organization's number.

For electronic applications, you must file an electronic application at the Web site:

<http://www.grants.gov>. You must be registered with Grants.gov before you can submit a grant application. If you have not used Grants.gov before, you will need to register with the CCR and the Credential Provider. You will need a DUNS number to access or register at any of the services.

2. Central Contractor Registration (CCR).

(a) In accordance with 2 CFR part 25, applicants, whether applying electronically or by paper, must be registered in the CCR prior to submitting an application. Applicants may register for the CCR at <https://www.uscontractorregistration.com/> or by calling 1-877-252-2700.

Completing the CCR registration process takes up to five business days, and applicants are strongly encouraged to begin the process well in advance of the deadline specified in this notice.

(b) The CCR registration must remain active, with current information, at all times during which an entity has an application under consideration by an agency or has an active Federal Award. To remain registered in the CCR database after the initial registration, the applicant is required to review and update, on an annual basis from the date of initial registration or subsequent updates, its information in the CCR database to ensure it is current, accurate and complete.

3. Applications submitted by paper:

(a) Send or deliver paper applications by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) or courier delivery services to: Water and Environmental Programs, Rural Utilities Service, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Attention: Joyce M. Taylor, Mail STOP 1570, Room 2233-S, Washington, DC, 20250-1570.

(b) For paper applications mail or ensure delivery of an original paper application (no stamped, photocopied, or initialed signatures) and two copies by the deadline date. The application and any materials sent with it become Federal records by law and cannot be returned to you.

4. Electronically submitted applications:

(a) Applications will not be accepted by fax or electronic mail.

(b) Electronic applications for grants will be accepted if submitted through Grants.gov at <http://www.grants.gov>.

(c) Applicants must preregister successfully with Grants.gov to use the electronic applications option. Application information may be downloaded from Grants.gov without preregistration.

(d) Applicants who apply through Grants.gov should submit their electronic applications before the deadline.

(e) Grants.gov contains full instructions on all required passwords, credentialing, and software. Follow the instructions at Grants.gov for registering and submitting an electronic application.

(f) Grants.gov has two preregistration requirements: A DUNS number and an active registration in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). See Items 1 and 2, above for instructions on obtaining a DUNS number and registering in the CCR.

C. A complete application must meet the following requirements:

1. To be considered for support, you must be an eligible entity and must submit a complete application by the deadline date. You should consult the cost principles and general administrative requirements for grants pertaining to their organizational type in order to

prepare the budget and complete other parts of the application. You also must demonstrate compliance (or intent to comply), through certification or other means, with a number of public policy requirements.

2. Applicants must complete and submit the following forms to apply for a RFP grant:

- (a) Standard Form 424, “Application for Federal Assistance”
- (b) Standard Form 424A, “Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs”
- (c) Standard Form 424B, “Assurances—Non-Construction Programs”
- (d) Standard Form LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activity”
- (e) Form RD 400-1, “Equal Opportunity Agreement”
- (f) Form RD 400-4, “Assurance Agreement (Under Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964)”

3. The project proposal should outline the project in sufficient detail to provide a reader with a complete understanding of how the loan program will work. Explain what you will accomplish by lending funds to eligible entities. Demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed loan program in meeting the objectives of this grant program. The proposal should cover the following elements:

- (a) Present a brief project overview. Explain the purpose of the project, how it relates to RUS’s purposes, how you will carry out the project, what the project will produce, and who will direct it.
- (b) Describe why the project is necessary. Demonstrate that eligible entities need loan funds. Quantify the number of prospective borrowers or provide statistical or narrative evidence that a sufficient number of borrowers will exist to justify the grant award. Describe the service area. Address community needs.

(c) Clearly state your project goals. Your objectives should clearly describe the goals and be concrete and specific enough to be quantitative or observable. They should also be feasible and relate to the purpose of the loan program.

(d) The narrative should cover in more detail the items briefly described in the Project Summary. It should establish the basis for any claims that you have substantial expertise in promoting the safe and productive use of revolving funds. In describing what the project will achieve, you should tell the reader if it also will have broader influence. The narrative should address the following points:

(1) Document your ability to administer and service a revolving fund in accordance with the provisions of 7 CFR part 1783.

(2) Document your ability to commit financial resources to establish the RFP with funds your organization controls. This documentation should describe the sources of funds other than the RFP grant that will be used to pay your operational costs and provide financial assistance for projects.

(3) Demonstrate that you have secured commitments of significant financial support from other funding sources, if appropriate.

(4) List the fees and charges that borrowers will be assessed.

(e) The work plan must describe the tasks and activities that will be accomplished with available resources during the grant period. It must show the work you plan to do to achieve the anticipated outcomes, goals, and objectives set out for the RFP. The plan must:

(1) Describe the work to be performed by each person.

(2) Give a schedule or timetable of work to be done.

- (3) Show evidence of previous experience with the techniques to be used or their successful use by others.
- (4) Outline the loan program to include the following: specific loan purposes, a loan application process; priorities, borrower eligibility criteria, limitations, fees, interest rates, terms, and collateral requirements.
- (5) Provide a marketing plan.
- (6) Explain the mechanics of how you will transfer loan funds to the borrowers.
- (7) Describe follow-up or continuing activities that should occur after project completion such as monitoring and reporting borrowers' accomplishments.
- (8) Describe how the results will be evaluated. The evaluation criteria should be in line with the project objectives.
- (9) List all personnel responsible for administering this program along with a statement of their qualifications and experience.
- (f) The written justification for projected costs should explain how budget figures were determined for each category. It should indicate which costs are to be covered by grant funds and which costs will be met by your organization or other organizations. The justification should account for all expenditures discussed in the narrative. It should reflect appropriate cost-sharing contributions. The budget justification should explain the budget and accounting system proposed or in place. The administrative costs for operating the budget should be expressed as a percentage of the overall budget. The budget justification should provide specific budget figures, rounding off figures to the nearest dollar. Applicants should consult OMB Circular A-122: "Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations" for information about appropriate costs for each budget category.

(g) In addition to completing the standard application forms, you must submit:

1. Supplementary material that demonstrate that your organization is legally recognized under state and Federal law. Satisfactory documentation includes, but is not limited to, certificates from the Secretary of State, or copies of state statutes or laws establishing your organization. Letters from the IRS awarding tax-exempt status are not considered adequate evidence.
2. A certified list of directors and officers with their respective terms.
3. Evidence of tax exempt status from the IRS.
4. Debarment and suspension information required in accordance with 7 CFR, part 3017, subpart 3017.335, if it applies. The section heading is “What information must I provide before entering into a covered transaction with the Department of Agriculture?” It is part of the Department of Agriculture’s rules on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension.
5. All of your organization’s known workplaces by including the actual address of buildings (or parts of buildings) or other sites where work under the award takes place. Workplace identification is required under the drug-free workplace requirements in accordance with 7 CFR, part 3021, subpart 3021.230. The section heading is “How and when must I identify workplaces?” It is part of the Department of Agriculture’s rules on Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance).
6. The most recent audit of your organization.
7. The following financial statements:
 - i. A pro forma balance sheet at start-up and for at least three additional years; Balance sheets, income statements, and cash flow statements for the last three years.

ii. If your organization has been formed less than three years, the financial statements should be submitted for the periods from inception to the present. Projected income and cash flow statements for at least three years supported by a list of assumptions showing the basis for the projections. The projected income statement and balance sheet must include one set of projections that shows the revolving loan fund only and a separate set of projections that shows your organization's total operations.

8. Additional information to support and describe your plan for achieving the grant objectives. The information may be regarded as essential for understanding and evaluating the project and may be found in as letters of support, resolutions, policies, and other relevant documents. The supplements may be presented in appendices to the proposal.

V. Application Review Information

A. Within 30 days of receiving your application, RUS will send you a letter of acknowledgment. Your application will be reviewed for completeness to determine if you included all of the items required. If your application is incomplete or ineligible, RUS will return it to you with an explanation.

B. A review team, composed of at least two members, will evaluate all applications and proposals. They will make overall recommendations based on factors such as eligibility, application completeness, and conformity to application requirements. They will score the applications based on criteria in the next section.

C. All applications that are complete and eligible will be ranked competitively based on the following scoring criteria:

- (1) Degree of expertise and successful experience in making and servicing commercial loans, with a successful record, for the following number of full years:
 - (a) At least 1 but less than 3 years – 5 points
 - (b) At least 3 but less than 5 years – 10 points
 - (c) At least 5 but less than 10 years – 20 points
 - (d) 10 or more years – 30 points
- (2) Extent to which the work plan demonstrates a well thought out, comprehensive approach to accomplishing the objectives of this part, clearly defines who will be served by the project, clearly articulates the problem/issues to be addressed, identifies the service area to be covered by the RFP loans and appears likely to be sustainable; Up to 40 points
- (3) Percentage of applicant contributions. Points allowed under this paragraph will be based on written evidence of the availability of funds from sources other than the proceeds of an RFP grant to pay part of the cost of a loan recipient's project. In-kind contributions will not be considered. Funds from other sources as a percentage of the RFP grant and points corresponding to such percentages are as follows:
 - (a) Less than 20% - ineligible
 - (b) At least 20% but less than 50% - 10 points
 - (c) 50% or more – 20 points
- (4) Extent to which the goals and objectives are clearly defined, tied to the work plan, and are measurable; Up to 15 points
- (5) Lowest ratio of projected administrative expenses to loans advanced; Up to 10 points

(6) The evaluation methods for considering loan applications and making RFP loans are specific to the program, clearly defined, measurable, and are consistent with program outcomes; Up to 20 points

(7) Administrator's discretion, considering such factors as creative outreach ideas for marketing RFP loans to rural residents; the amount of funds requested in relation to the amount of needs demonstrated in the work plan; previous experiences demonstrating excellent utilization of a revolving loan fund grant; and optimizing the use of agency resources; Up to 10 points.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. RUS will rank all qualifying applications by their final score. Applications will be selected for funding, based on the highest scores and the availability of funding for RFP grants. Each applicant will be notified in writing of the score its application receives.

B. In making its decision about your application, RUS may determine that your application is:

1. Eligible and selected for funding,
2. Eligible but offered fewer funds than requested,
3. Eligible but not selected for funding, or
4. Ineligible for the grant.

C. In accordance with 7 CFR Part 1900, subpart B, you generally have the right to appeal adverse decisions. Some adverse decisions cannot be appealed. For example, if you are

denied RUS funding due to a lack of funds available for the grant program, this decision cannot be appealed. However, you may make a request to the National Appeals Division (NAD) to review the accuracy of our finding that the decision cannot be appealed. The appeal must be in writing and filed at the appropriate Regional Office, which can be found at <http://www.nad.usda.gov/offices.htm> or by calling (703) 305-1166.

D. Applicants selected for funding will complete a grant agreement, which outlines the terms and conditions of the grant award.

E. Grantees will be reimbursed as follows:

1. SF-270, "Request for Advance or Reimbursement," will be completed by the grantee and submitted to either the State or National Office not more frequently than monthly.
2. Upon receipt of a properly completed SF-270, the funds will be requested through the field office terminal system. Ordinarily, payment will be made within 30 days after receipt of a proper request for reimbursement.
3. Grantees are encouraged to use women- and minority-owned banks (a bank which is owned at least 50 percent by women or minority group members) for the deposit and disbursement of funds.

F. Any change in the scope of the project, budget adjustments of more than 10 percent of the total budget, or any other significant change in the project must be reported to and approved by the approval official by written amendment to the grant agreement. Any change not approved may be cause for termination of the grant.

G. Grantees shall constantly monitor performance to ensure that time schedules are being met, projected work by time periods is being accomplished, and other performance objectives are being achieved. The Grantee will provide project reports as follows:

1. SF-269, "Financial Status Report (short form)," and a project performance activity report will be required of all grantees on a quarterly basis, due 30 days after the end of each quarter.
2. A final project performance report will be required with the last SF-269 due 90 days after the end of the last quarter in which the project is completed. The final report may serve as the last quarterly report.

3. All multi-State grantees are to submit an original of each report to the National Office.

Grantees serving only one State are to submit an original of each report to the State Office.

The project performance reports should detail, preferably in a narrative format, activities that have transpired for the specific time period.

H. The grantee will provide an audit report or financial statements as follows:

1. Grantees expending \$500,000 or more Federal funds per fiscal year will submit an audit conducted in accordance with OMB Circular A-133. The audit will be submitted within 9 months after the grantee's fiscal year. Additional audits may be required if the project period covers more than one fiscal year.

2. Grantees expending less than \$500,000 will provide annual financial statements covering the grant period, consisting of the organization's statement of income and expense and

balance sheet signed by an appropriate official of the organization. Financial statements will be submitted within 90 days after the grantee's fiscal year.

3. Recipient and Subrecipient Reporting.

The applicant must have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the reporting requirements for first-tier sub-awards and executive compensation under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 in the event the applicant receives funding unless such applicant is exempt from such reporting requirements pursuant to 2 CFR part 170, §170.110(b). The reporting requirements under the Transparency Act pursuant to 2 CFR part 170 are as follows:

(a) First Tier Sub-Awards of \$25,000 or more in non-Recovery Act funds (unless they are exempt under 2 CFR part 170) must be reported by the Recipient to <http://www.fsrs.gov> no later than the end of the month following the month the obligation was made.

(b) The Total Compensation of the Recipient's Executives (5 most highly compensated executives) must be reported by the Recipient (if the Recipient meets the criteria under 2 CFR part 170) to <http://www.ccr.gov> by the end of the month following the month in which the award was made.

(c) The Total Compensation of the Subrecipient's Executives (5 most highly compensated executives) must be reported by the Subrecipient (if the Subrecipient meets the criteria under 2 CFR part 170) to the Recipient by the end of the month following the month in which the subaward was made.

VII. Agency Contacts

A. Web site: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water>. The Rural Utilities Service Web site maintains up-to-date resources and contact information for the RFP.

B. Phone: 202-720-9589.

C. Fax: 202-690-0649.

D. E-mail: <mailto:JoyceM.Taylor@wdc.usda.gov>

E. Main point of contact: Joyce M. Taylor, Community Programs Specialist, Water and Environmental Programs, Water Programs Division, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Dated: April 13, 2012

JONATHAN ADELSTEIN

Administrator

Rural Utilities Service

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